

COMPANY IMPROVES PROCESS FLOW, QUADRUPLES PRODUCTION

ABOUT STARC SYSTEMS. STARC Systems, Inc. (Simple Telescoping Airtight Containment Reusable System) produces containment systems and modular telescoping panels for use in healthcare, commercial construction, data centers, academia, laboratories, and office environments. With 12 employees, the company operates out of TechPlace, Brunswick Landing's Technology Accelerator in Brunswick, Maine.

THE CHALLENGE. STARC Systems worked with project managers at the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP), part of the MEP National Network™, to set up a manufacturing facility at TechPlace. Maine MEP recommended handling the layout in two ways; the first based on existing sales volumes and product designs, and the second based on larger sales volumes to give STARC Systems a basic road map to follow as the business grows. The layouts needed to incorporate Lean concepts in order to support as much efficiency as possible.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Maine MEP conducted two separate engagements with STARC Systems over a 14-month period. During that time, the company grew from a "prototype" shop into a fully functional manufacturing facility with established quality, inventory, production, safety, and planning systems. Maine MEP used Value Stream Mapping to identify each step of all the different aspects of a panel's assembly process and analyze areas of congestion. STARC Systems worked with Maine MEP to lay out a more efficient flow, taking into account "monuments" and assessing how future growth would impact the manufacturing process. The company grew into two additional spaces within TechPlace, and Maine MEP used the same process to evaluate and develop efficient flows, implementing Lean concepts throughout the process. STARC Systems participated in a 5S workplace organization exercise and succeeded in limiting the number of times parts are handled and cutting quality defect rates. The company also implemented a production scheduling board concept to facilitate a self-directed production floor, and introduced a visual Kan Ban system to improve inventory management.

"We've been able to bring key process capabilities in-house, reducing costs, while improving responsiveness to our growing production demands," said Bruce Bickford, co-founder and COO. STARC Systems more than quadrupled production and the company is adding jobs.

"In 2017 and beyond, we'll continue to leverage the lessons brought to us by MEP as we increase our capacity and expand into new products and markets. MEP will be called upon as we continue to enhance our systems, taking us to the next level as we become a significant supplier in our markets and a strong, growing manufacturer and employer in Maine."

-Bruce Bickford, Co-Founder and COO

RESULTS



Increased production by 400%, from 10-15 panels per day to **90** per day



Added **9** jobs



Increased daily shipping volumes per employee by **200%**



Doubled production space and increased workcell efficiency by **500%**

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